

The invention claimed is:

1. A food patty-forming apparatus for forming food patties from pressurized food product, comprising:
 - a frame;
 - 5 a first plate carried by said frame;
 - a second plate carried by said frame, said second plate spaced from and facing said first plate;
 - a mold plate guided to reciprocate longitudinally between said first and second plates between a fill position and a discharge position, said mold plate
 - 10 having a laterally contoured region extending longitudinally, said contoured region having a raised first surface and a raised second surface, said mold plate having a cavity through said contoured region, said first plate having a recessed first surface extending longitudinally and corresponding in shape to the raised second surface of said mold plate and a fill opening in communication with said
 - 15 cavity when said mold plate is in said fill position during reciprocation of said mold plate, and when said mold plate is in said discharge position, said cavity being exposed outside said first plate, said second plate having a recessed second surface extending longitudinally and corresponding in shape to the raised first surface of said mold plate, said first and second recessed surfaces of said
 - 20 first and second plates respectively together forming a channel that closely conforms to said contoured region of said mold plate;
 - a mechanism operatively connected to said mold plate to reciprocate said mold plate between said fill position and said discharge position; and

a food product delivery configured to deliver pressurized food product into said fill opening.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said second plate
5 includes breather holes that are in communication with said cavity during filling of said cavity with food product, said breather holes also being in communication with non-pressurized atmosphere.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said mold plate
10 includes flat first surface areas extending longitudinally on opposite lateral sides of said raised first surface and flat second surface areas extending longitudinally on opposite lateral sides of said raised second surface, and said first plate includes flat first plate surfaces extending longitudinally and flush with said flat first surface areas of said mold plate, and said second plate includes flat second
15 plate surfaces extending longitudinally and flush with said flat second surface areas of said mold plate.

4. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said cavity has a horizontal perimeter that includes curved lines.

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5. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said cavity comprises a vertical profile having curved top and bottom surfaces.

6. The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said cavity comprises a horizontal profile having curved sides.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said cavity simulates the shape of a chicken drumstick.

8. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first plate is arranged above said mold plate and said second plate is arranged below said mold plate.

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9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said first plate is arranged below said mold plate and said second plate is arranged above said mold plate.

15 10. Tooling for a food patty-forming apparatus for forming food patties from pressurized food product, the apparatus having food product delivery configured to deliver pressurized food product into a fill opening of said tooling, a mechanism operatively connected to said mold plate to reciprocate said mold plate between a fill position and a discharge position, the tooling comprising:

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a first plate;

a second plate, said second plate spaced from and facing said first plate;

a mold plate arranged to reciprocate longitudinally between said first and second plates between a fill position and a discharge position, said mold plate

having a laterally contoured region extending longitudinally, said contoured region having a raised first surface and a raised second surface, said mold plate having a cavity through said contoured region, said first plate having a recessed first surface extending longitudinally and corresponding in shape to the raised
5 second surface of said mold plate and a fill opening in communication with said cavity when said mold plate is in said fill position during reciprocation of said mold plate, and when said mold plate is in said discharge position, said cavity being exposed outside said first plate, said second plate having a recessed second surface extending longitudinally and corresponding in shape to the raised
10 first surface of said mold plate, said first and second recessed surfaces of said first and second plates respectively together forming a channel that closely conforms to said contoured region of said mold plate.

11. The tooling according to claim 10, wherein said second plate
15 includes breather holes through a thickness of said second plate that are in communication with said cavity during filling of said cavity with food product.

12. The tooling according to claim 10, wherein said mold plate includes flat first surface areas extending longitudinally on opposite lateral sides of said
20 raised first surface and flat second surface areas extending longitudinally on opposite lateral sides of said raised second surface, and said first plate includes flat first plate surfaces extending longitudinally and flush with said flat first surface areas of said mold plate, and said second plate includes flat second plate

surfaces extending longitudinally and flush with said flat second surface areas of said mold plate.

13. The tooling according to claim 10, wherein said cavity has a
5 horizontal perimeter that includes curved lines.

14. The tooling according to claim 10, wherein said cavity comprises a vertical profile having curved top and bottom surfaces.

10 15. The tooling according to claim 14, wherein said cavity comprises a horizontal profile having curved sides.

16. The tooling according to claim 15, wherein said cavity simulates the shape of a chicken drumstick.

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17. The tooling according to claim 1, wherein said first plate is configured to be arranged above said mold plate and said second plate comprises a breather plate having breather holes.

20 18. The tooling according to claim 1, wherein said first plate is configured to be arranged below said mold plate and said second plate comprises a breather plate having breather holes.